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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7124  
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000114

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 12958 DECL: 02/18/2029  
TAGS PGOV, PINR, ST, CN, XL  
SUBJECT: ANTIGUA: UPHEAVAL ON THE EVE OF ELECTIONS

Classified By: Classified By: Charge d, Affaires, a.i. D. Brent Hardt, f or reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) Antiguan PM Spencer's February 17 announcement of March 12 as the date for parliamentary elections was almost immediately overshadowed

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PM Spencer Sets March 12 elections Date  
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2. (C) Prime Minister Spencer called on the Governor General to issue the writ for election for March 12 during his live televised address to

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Pre-Elections Violence on the Rise  
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3. (C) Just prior to the PM's announcement of the election date, the district offices of two ALP candidates were set aflame early on the morn

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Fallout from Stanford Indictment  
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4. (C) No sooner did the PM's election date announcement hit the airwaves, when news of a major SEC indictment against Antigua's richest citiz

5. (C) Eastern Caribbean Central Bank Governor Sir Dwight Venner, meanwhile, phoned the Charge from his office in St. Kitts seeking further cl

6. (C) Steadroy Benjamin speculated that the PM called for elections immediately after the Stanford indictment due to the potential fallout sh

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Meanwhile, on the Streets...  
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7. (C) These latest shockers come on the heels of another headline-grabbing spike in violent crime in Antigua. Incidents of violent crime cont

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Cricket Test Match Placates Masses for Now  
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8. (C) The one bright spot for the country, Commissioner Bennett commented, has been a cricket test match between England and the West Indies

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Comment  
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9. (C) The United Progressive Party (UPP), once the clear favorite to return to power, now has a real fight on its hands, which few predicted